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## How Much Are You Eating?

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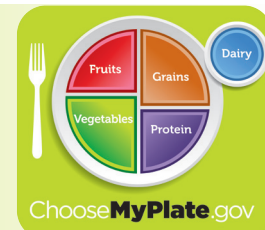
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# HOW MUCH are you eating?



*Americans tend to think bigger is better, especially when it comes to food portions. Thinking bigger is better usually leads to overeating and weight gain, which leads to the development of chronic health problems such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and certain types of cancer. It is important to manage your weight in order to manage your overall health and well-being. One key to getting or keeping your weight in a healthy range is to make sensible choices about food portions.*

Food portions are a particular challenge in our “super-sized” society. Let’s say you had dinner at an Italian restaurant last night and ordered spaghetti with meatballs. While you were waiting for your order, you ate two slices of garlic bread. Let’s examine this dinner to see if it had the right combination of food in the appropriate portions.

You can determine if your spaghetti dinner had the right kinds and amounts of food by using MyPlate recommendations. MyPlate graphically depicts the five basic food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy and balanced diet. It also illustrates the recommended proportion of food groups for each meal. The MyPlate website also includes the overall daily recommendations for each food group.

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## MyPlate recommended amounts

MyPlate provides recommendations as cup and ounce equivalents to prevent variability in interpretation. What counts as an equivalent?

### CUP— amount of fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods

#### 1 cup of Vegetables =

- 2 cups of raw, leafy vegetables
- 1 cup of other vegetables — cooked or raw
- 1 cup of vegetable juice

#### 1 cup of Fruit =

- 1 small apple, banana, or orange
- 1 medium pear
- 1 cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit
- 1 cup of fruit juice
- ½ cup dried fruit

#### 1 cup of Dairy (preferably fat free or low fat) =

- 1 cup of milk\* or yogurt
- 8 fluid ounces of yogurt
- 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese (cheddar)
- 2 ounces of processed cheese (American)

### OUNCE— amount of grain and protein foods

#### 1 ounce of Grains (preferably whole grains) =

- 1 regular slice of bread
- 1 cup of ready-to-eat flake cereal
- ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta
- ¼ bagel or 1 mini bagel

#### 1 ounce of Protein (preferably lean or low fat) =









- 1 ounce cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish
- ¼ cup of cooked dry beans or tofu
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon of peanut or almond butter
- ½ ounce of nuts

\* This includes lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk products. Soy-based beverages with added calcium are an option for those who prefer a non-dairy source of calcium.

Think about the amount of spaghetti, sauce, and meat. How many cups of spaghetti were on your plate? How many cups of spaghetti sauce? How many ounces of meatballs? Do you really have any idea what a cup or ounce looks like without weighing or measuring your food?

## Estimating amounts

Having the skill to estimate amounts is helpful because most of us will not have cups and balances with us every time we eat. Use these common items to help visualize and estimate the amount of food that is on your plate.

 <p>CD = 1 (1 ounce) pancake or waffle</p>	 <p>Deck of cards = 3 ounces of cooked meat, poultry, or fish</p>	 <p>Softball = 1 cup raw leafy vegetables, milk, or yogurt</p>
 <p>CD case = 1 slice (1 ounce) of bread</p>	 <p>Check book = 3 ounces of fish</p>	 <p>Baseball = 1 medium size fruit or ½ cup ice cream</p>
 <p>Computer mouse = 1 medium potato or a serving of rice or pasta</p>	 <p>Two dominos or 4 dice = 2 ounces of cheese*</p>	

\* Cheese: 1½ ounces of natural cheese or 2 ounces of processed cheese can be considered as 1 cup from the Dairy Group

## Putting the My in MyPlate: Personalizing MyPlate Recommendations

Knowing your daily caloric needs is necessary to personalize MyPlate for you. The amount of calories you need depends on your age, gender, and level of physical activity. The following chart recommends caloric intakes for various ages and gender and are based on low levels of activity (less than 30 minutes per day), which is typical among most Americans.


	HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED EACH DAY?					
	CHILDREN 4 to 8 years	GIRLS 9 to 13 years	BOYS 9 to 13 years GIRLS 14 to 18 years FEMALES 31 to 50 years	FEMALES 19 to 30 years	BOYS 14 to 18 years MALES 31 to 50 years	MALES 19 to 30 years
<b>RECOMMENDED CALORIES</b>	1,400 calories	1,600 calories	1,800 calories	2,000 calories	2,200 calories	2,400 calories
<b>GRAINS</b> (Bread, cereal, rice, and pasta)	5 ounce equivalents	5 ounce equivalents	6 ounce equivalents	6 ounce equivalents	7 ounce equivalents	8 ounce equivalents
<b>PROTEIN FOODS</b> (Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts)—preferably lean or low fat	4 ounce equivalents	5 ounce equivalents	5 ounce equivalents	5 ½ ounce equivalents	6 ounce equivalents	6 ½ ounce equivalents
<b>VEGETABLES</b>	1 ½ cups	2 cups	2 ½ cups	2 ½ cups	3 cups	3 cups
<b>FRUITS</b>	1 ½ cups	1 ½ cups	1 ½ cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups
<b>DAIRY</b> (Milk, yogurt, cheese)—preferably fat free or low fat*	2 ½ cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups

\* This includes lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk products. Soy-based beverages with added calcium are an option for those who prefer a non-dairy source of calcium.

Table 1 compares your spaghetti dinner to MyPlate recommendations for someone needing 1,800 calories daily. The spaghetti dinner met the ENTIRE DAY'S (100%) grain and protein recommendations. On the other hand, only 40 percent of your vegetable, and no fruit or dairy recommendations were met.




Now compare that meal to an ENTIRE DAY'S menu that includes a modified spaghetti dinner. Which is more realistic, eating all your grain and protein foods in one meal or throughout the day? Grain and protein foods help you feel full longer and decrease hunger, which can help with weight maintenance. Try spreading these two food groups throughout the day to manage your hunger and weight!

**Table 1. Comparison of spaghetti dinner and MyPlate recommendations (1,800 calories)**

	FOOD (Food Group)		
	Spaghetti and garlic bread (GRAINS)	Tomato sauce (VEGETABLES)	Meatballs (PROTEIN)
<b>What you ate</b>	2 cups of spaghetti (4 ounce equivalents) and 2 slices (2 ounce equivalents) of garlic bread	1 cup	6 ounce equivalents
<b>Cup/ounce equivalents</b>	6 ounce equivalents	1 cup	6 ounce equivalents
<b>MyPlate daily recommendation</b>	6 ounce equivalents	2 ½ cups	5 ½ ounce equivalents
<b>% MyPlate daily recommendation*</b>	100%	40%	109%


\* This table tells us that 100% of the daily needs for grains, 40% of the daily needs for vegetables, and 109% of the daily needs for protein were consumed from this one meal.

**Example of a day's meal plan with the modified spaghetti dinner (1,800 calories)**

	½ cup oatmeal = 1 ounce equivalent (GRAINS)	1 small banana = 1 cup equivalent (FRUIT)	1 cup milk, 1% = 1 cup equivalent (DAIRY)
	1 hamburger bun = 2 ounce equivalents (GRAINS)	1 cup Romaine lettuce = ½ cup equivalent (VEGETABLES)	3 ounce hamburger patty = 3 ounce equivalents (PROTEIN) 2 ounces of American cheese = 1 cup equivalent (DAIRY)
	1 slice of garlic bread = 1 ounce equivalent (GRAINS) 1 cup of spaghetti = 2 ounce equivalents (GRAINS)	¼ cup grapes = ¼ cup equivalent (FRUIT) ¼ cup apple slices = ¼ cup equivalent (FRUIT)	1 cup tomato sauce = 1 cup equivalent (VEGETABLES) 1 cup broccoli = 1 cup equivalent (VEGETABLES) 2 ounces of meatballs = 2 ounce equivalents (PROTEIN) 1 cup milk, 1% = 1 cup equivalent (DAIRY)
<b>TOTAL</b>	6 ounce equivalents (GRAINS)	1 ½ cup equivalents (FRUIT)	2 ½ cup equivalents (VEGETABLES) 5 ounce equivalents (PROTEIN) 3 cup equivalents (DAIRY)

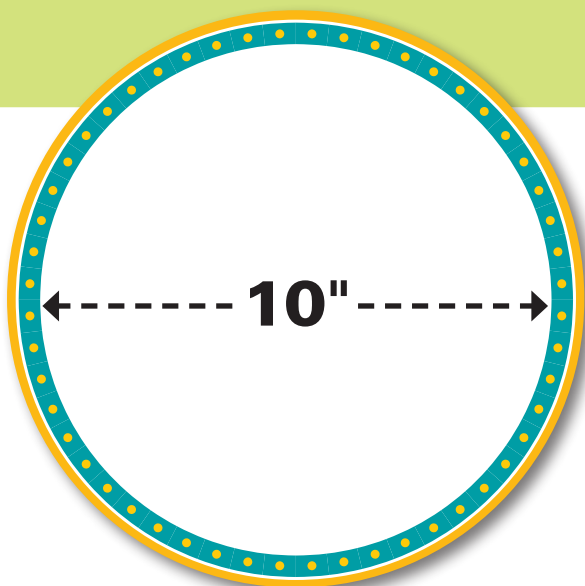


## Tips to help you choose sensible amounts

When eating out	At home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose entrées offered as “small” and “half-portion” or split an entrée with a friend.</li> <li>Order an appetizer or side dish as your main course.</li> <li>Drink water to quench your thirst.</li> <li>Ask the server to box half your meal or ask for a doggie bag to take leftovers home; be sure to chill the food within 2 hours.</li> <li>Ask for dressings and sauces “on the side.”</li> <li>Avoid “all-you-can-eat” buffets.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measure the amount of food you eat with standard measuring cups on a regular basis.</li> <li>Measure the amount of food/beverage held by plates, bowls, glasses, and cups you typically use so you see what appropriate portions look like using your dishes.</li> <li>Use smaller plates (10 inches), bowls, glasses, and cups at meals.</li> <li>Limit amounts of high-calorie foods, such as sweets and fried foods, in the house.</li> <li>Put sensible amounts of food on your plate and don't take seconds.</li> </ul>

### Convenience products

- MyPlate recommendations are often smaller than those on the Nutrition Facts Label.
- Pay attention to serving size and number of servings by reading the Nutrition Facts Label.
- Nutrition information on the package, including calories, is based on the listed serving size.
- BEWARE of convenience food products that have an unrealistic serving size:
  - A serving of Double Stuffed Oreos is 2 cookies or 140 calories; however, the typical consumer eats 4-5 Oreos or 280-350 calories.
  - Garden of Eatin's snack size chip bag contains 2 servings, which is 300 calories for those who eat a whole bagful.



### The Bottom Line

- Choosing sensible amounts of food is fundamental to controlling caloric intake and maintaining a healthy weight.
- Know and choose the recommended amounts from the five MyPlate food groups based on your age, gender, and activity level.
- Pay attention to the amount of food you are eating—know how many cup and ounce equivalents you are eating.
- Keep sensible amounts in mind at restaurants as well as at home (use a 10-inch plate).

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...and justice for all

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